



NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON DISPROPORTIONATE STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Indiana Civil Rights Commission
Education Steering Committee
Indiana Government Center

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Dr. Elizabeth Mimms, Program Manager
University of Michigan School of Education
Programs for Educational Opportunity
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259

<http://www.umich.edu/~eqtnet>

emimms@umich.edu

734-763-9910

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OVERVIEW

- I. Definitions
- II. Extent of disproportionate student discipline
- III. Effects of disproportionality
- IV. Why disproportionality exists
- V. Principles for addressing disproportionate discipline
- VI. Ways to address disproportionate discipline
- VII. A short data-working exercise



I. DEFINITIONS

A. “Disproportionate”

1. Inequitable; not properly related in size, amount, or scale (Roget’s Thesaurus)
2. Not in fair or equal terms (Wikipedia)

B. “Disproportionate student discipline”

Students being affected by school discipline system above the percentage their group is of the student body.

II. EXTENT OF DISPROPORTIONATE DISCIPLINE

A. Persistent

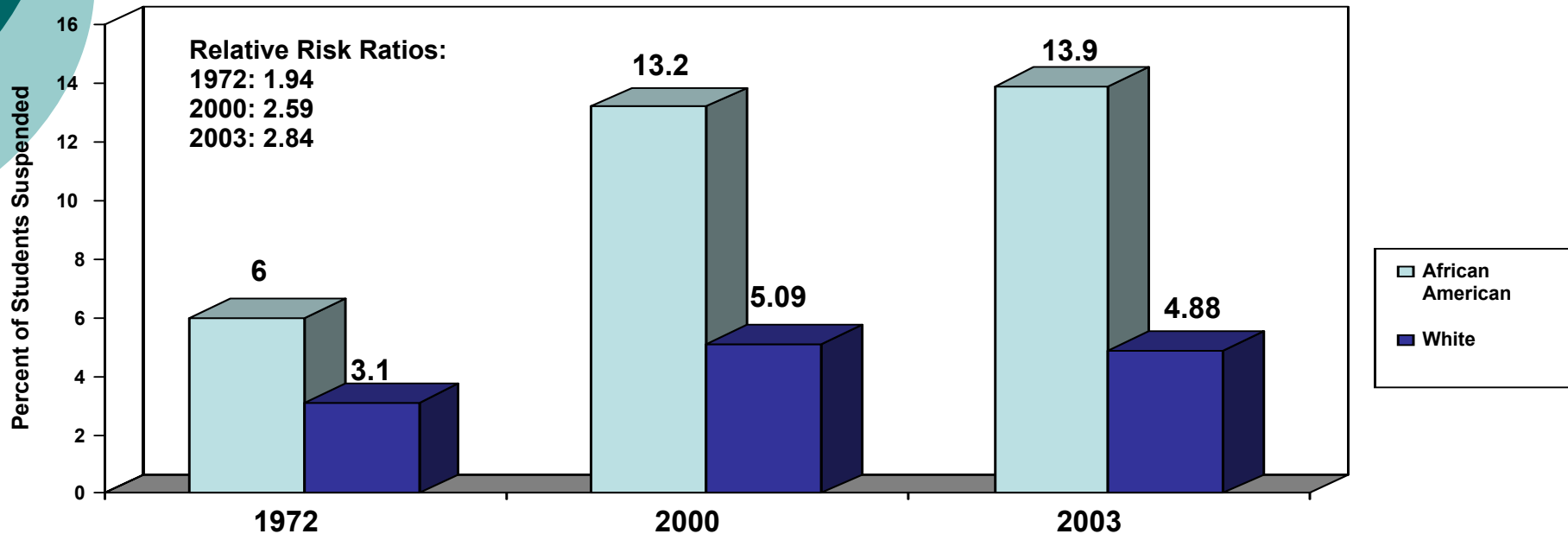
1. Over time - from court monitored to present
2. Over changing landscapes - predominantly white to predominantly “minority” districts

B. Increased over time

See table on following page.

Disproportionality in School Discipline at the National Level: 1972, 2000, 2003

Provided by Russell Skiba



Reference table on previous page:

A. Persistent

- a. Disproportionality evident over 31 year period, 1972-2003
- b. Persistent gap in % disciplined

B1. Increased percent over time

Black: 6% → 13.2% → 13.9%

White 3% → 5.09% → 4.88%

B2. Increased risk ratio for blacks


1.94 → 2.59 → 2.84



III. EFFECTS OF DISPROPORTIONALITY

A. Some Effects on Teaching & Learning


1. Restricted access to educational services and benefits
2. Less instructional time with qualified teachers
3. Achievement problems, e.g., lower academic engagement, fall behind in course work

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4. Negative school experience
 5. Drop out - Suspended and expelled students more likely to drop out.
 6. Unfairly impacted students less trusting of responsible adults and institutional structures
 7. Cost of staff time, taxpayer money, & other resources if district has to respond to law suit or Office for Civil Rights investigation



B. Effects On Community

1. Unsupervised students
2. Increased delinquency and crime
3. Under-developed human resources
4. Poorly prepared employees

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5. Poorly prepared citizens - low voting, low community spirit, disengaged
 6. Lost earnings
 7. Lost taxes
 8. Increased social costs - welfare, juvenile system, prisons, health care, etc.
 9. Lower economic development of neighborhoods, communities, cities, states, and nation

IV . WHY DISPROPORTIONALITY EXISTS?

- It's a matter of ...
 - A. Philosophy
 - B. Policies and rules
 - C. Information systems
 - D. Programming



A. AREAS OF CONCERN: PHILOSOPHY

1. Firm, fair, consistent, and equitable discipline is not the norm
2. Disproportionate student discipline is tolerated as the norm.
3. Every role group is not implicated.
4. What is reported is considered the whole iceberg.
5. Suspended and expelled students are separated from valuable educational services.
6. Undereducated children and underdeveloped families and communities are tolerated as fallout from the great experiment of public education




B. AREAS OF CONCERN: POLICIES, PROCEDURES, PRACTICES, & CLASSROOM RULES

1. Discipline policies, etc. are discriminatory based on race, gender, or national origin
2. Discipline policies, etc. are applied in a discriminatory manner
3. Equitable application of discipline policies, etc. has a discriminatory impact.
4. Discipline policies, etc. are not regularly examined and revised.



C. AREAS OF CONCERN: INFORMATION SYSTEMS

1. District and building administrators do not use discipline referral data and other discipline data, to study and address disproportionality problems.
2. Staff disciplinary practices are not tracked, analyzed, and used to address staff development needs

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3. Building staff do not collaborate to study and address disproportionality problems.
 4. Parents and other key school community members are not informed of disproportionate discipline problems and meaningfully involved in helping the school and district address this issue.



D. AREAS OF CONCERN: PROGRAMMING

1. Are not data driven or research based
2. Are reactive and punitive in intent rather than educational
3. Escalate student misbehavior
4. Do not explicitly teach cultural expectations of school and mainstream society
5. Do not take into consideration the culture of student groups in the school
6. Unnecessarily deny student educational services and benefits



V. PRINCIPLES FOR ADDRESSING DISPROPORTIONATE STUDENT DISCIPLINE


- A. Comprehensive
- B. Participatory
- C. Data driven
- D. Planned change/Organizational development



VI. AN APPROACH TO ADDRESS DISPROPORTIONATE DISCIPLINE

A. Characteristics

1. Comprehensive - Researches all components, Philosophy, policies (etc.), information system, approaches to discipline in district
2. Participatory - Promotes various levels of school-community involvement

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3. Data driven - Facilitates administrators examining and using discipline referral data to identify problems
 4. Organizational development - Use findings to plan change

B. STUDY DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

1. Purpose

Clarify beliefs, values, priorities of key groups regarding student discipline

Identify attitudes of students, parents, and school personnel toward their school's discipline system

2. Information Sources: People (e.g., school board, employees, students, parents, businesses, community agencies) and written statements of philosophy by state, district, building entities.

3. Information Gathering Methods - Focus groups, paper and pencil surveys, interviews, record reviews




C. STUDY WRITTEN DISCIPLINE POLICIES, RULES, PRACTICES & PROCEDURES

1. Analyze written discipline policies, classroom rules, etc. for legality, clarity, and comprehensiveness
2. Document current discipline procedures and practices and their outcomes (e.g., consistency and uniformity of use by all staff).
3. Evaluate disciplinary practices for bias and other problems



D. STUDY DISCIPLINE INFORMATION SYSTEM


1. Evaluate discipline data collection systems
2. Document how discipline data is currently being gathered and used by administrators, teachers, and others.
3. Record all removals for behavioral problems
4. Analyze discipline **referral** data by student grade level, socioeconomic status, gender, race, age, grade point average, retention history, etc.

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5. Analyze data by behavior category, location, time, referring staff member, disposition.
 6. Analyze behavior category by student characteristics
 7. Analyze student discipline data by staff involvement and by staff characteristics (e.g., building level, gender, race, age, years of service, qualifications)



E. CHANGE ORGANIZATION TO ADDRESS DISPROPORTIONATE STUDENT DISCIPLINE

1. Adopt a philosophy of discipline that encompasses the shared views of all role groups in the school community.
2. Make needed changes in discipline policies, procedures, practices, and classroom rules.
3. Use the discipline information system to identify and resolve discipline problems of students and the discipline managements problems of staff

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4. Keep parents informed and meaningfully involved in addressing student discipline issues
 5. Adopt discipline management approaches that teach skills for operating in the educational environment and mainstream culture
 6. Keep teachers, administrators, and other school staffs aware of and accountable for their biases

A SHORT DATA-WORKING EXERCISE

SAMPLE SCHOOL

- 500 = Student enrollment
- M = 260 (60 African-American, 200 White)
- F = 240 (50 African-American, 190 White)

Question:

What percent of student population are:

1. _____ Male
2. _____ Female
3. _____ African-American male
4. _____ White male
5. _____ African-American female
6. _____ White female

EXPECTED PROPORTION OF REFERRALS

If there were 960 referrals in one year, what would you expect the make up to be?

1. _____ Males
2. _____ Female
3. _____ African-American males
4. _____ White males
5. _____ African-American females
6. _____ White females

ACTUAL PROPORTION OF REFERRALS

Of 960 referrals one year, 600 were male, 360 female; 220 were African-American male, 110 African-American female. What was the actual percent of referrals for each group?

1. Total _____ (500/960)
2. Males _____ (600/960)
3. Female _____ (360/960)
4. A.A. Male _____ (220/960)
5. White male _____ (380/960)
6. A.A. Female _____ (110/960)
7. White female _____ (250/960)

RATE OF REFERRAL

The rate of referral per group is the number of referrals divided by the number in that group.

1. Total _____ 960/500
2. Males _____ (600/260)
3. Female _____ (360/240)
4. White males _____ (380/200)
5. A.A. males _____ (220/60)
6. White females _____ (250/190)
7. A.A. females _____ (110/50)

QUESTIONS

What might you find if you examined this school's

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1. Philosophy of discipline
2. Discipline policy, procedures, practices, classroom rules, etc.
3. Discipline information system
4. Approaches to managing discipline

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